

Child-Related Value Structures of East and West German Mothers

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The Value of Children Study

- Cross-cultural project studying
 - Value of children for parents
 - Parent-child relationships
 - in: China, Germany, Indonesia, Israel, Korea and Turkey
 - Other countries have joined the project:
Czech Republic, France, India, Nigeria, South Africa
- Original VOC-study
 - carried out in the 1970s
 - focused on the relationships between VOC and fertility



Comparison of Value Structures

- Search for value structures (profiles, typologies) using Latent Class Analysis (Eid, Langeheine, & Diener, 2003)
- East and West German mothers have different socialization backgrounds: East German mothers in our sample grew up in the former GDR and their first child was born when the GDR still existed
- **Question:**
Have different political and socio-economic conditions in the former GDR and the old FRG influenced mothers' present values of children?



Family Orientation in East and West

- Fertility higher in the GDR as compared to the FRG: 1.9 vs. 1.4 children per woman in 1980 (Bauerreiss, Bayer, & Bien, 1996)
- State-run child-care facilities allowed women in the GDR to combine job and family
- Family orientation provided emotional security and bonds in times of social and political tension in the GDR (Trommsdorff & Chakkarath, 1996)
- By the transformation since 1989 socio-structural conditions become more and more similar in East and West but values change rather slowly
- **Hypothesis:** Different socio-political contexts have resulted in a higher importance of family-related values of children in East as compared to West German mothers at present



Sample

■ Chemnitz (East)

- City in Eastern Germany (260.000 people)
- 104 mothers between 33 and 53 years ($m = 41.95$, $sd = 4.77$)

■ Konstanz (West)

- Small city in Southern Germany (80.000 people)
- 107 mothers between 35 and 60 years ($m = 45.60$, $sd = 4.88$)



Dimensions of VOC

1. Family-Related VOC
2. Old-Age Security VOC
3. Emotional VOC
4. Social and Economic VOC

All items measured on a 5-point scale:

1 = Not important at all

5 = Very important



Dimensions of VOC

1. Family-Related Value of Children

- Because any new family member makes your family more important
- Because having children brings your husband and you closer together
- Because having children intensifies contacts and communication with your kin
- Because having children increases your sense of responsibility and helps you develop



Dimensions of VOC

2. Old-Age Security Value of Children

- Because people with children are less likely to be lonely in old age
- Your children can help you when you're old

3. Emotional Value of Children

- Because it is a joy to have a small baby
- Because it is fun to have young children around
- Because of the pleasure you get from watching children grow
- To have someone to love and care for
- Because of the special feeling of love that develops between a parent and a child



Dimensions of VOC

4. Social and Economic Value of Children

- Because some of your older relatives feel that you should have more children
- To have one more person to help your family economically
- To carry on the family name
- When it is a duty according to your belief



Descriptive Statistics

VOC	East		West		
	Mean	(SD)	Mean	(SD)	
Family-related	3.16	(.92)	2.91	(.91)	*
Old-Age Security	3.02	(.96)	2.62	(.83)	*
Emotional	4.03	(.69)	3.96	(.73)	ns
Social and Economic	1.43	(.59)	1.33	(.48)	ns

* $p < .05$



Latent Class Analysis

- Probabilistic method to identify typological structures
 - Since LCA deals with discrete data and nominal categories, data had to be recoded into 4 categories
 - Scale mean from 1.00 – 1.99 → 1
 - Scale mean from 2.00 – 2.99 → 2
 - Scale mean from 3.00 – 3.99 → 3
 - Scale mean from 4.00 – 5.00 → 4
- Not important
-
- Important



Multigroup Latent Class Analysis

1. **How many latent classes** are necessary to describe child-related value structures in East and West Germany?
2. Are the resulting **typological structures** (latent classes) the **same or different** across cultural groups? (Question of structural equivalence)
3. Given structural equivalence, is the **distribution** of mothers belonging to different latent classes the **same or different** in East and West Germany? (Question of class sizes)



Number of Latent Classes

Single group analyses

	df	LR χ^2	p	AIC
East				
2 classes	230	83.06	1.0	835.6
3 classes	217	49.43	1.0	828.0
4 classes	204	35.71	1.0	840.3
West				
2 classes	230	55.56	1.0	824.7
3 classes	217	34.22	1.0	829.4
4 classes	204	24.40	1.0	845.6



Equivalence of Latent Classes

3-class multigroup analyses: LR difference tests

	$LR\chi^2$	df	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	p
Unrestricted model	83.66	434			
Equal response probabilities	124.43	470	40.77	36	.27
Equal latent distribution	133.04	472	8.61	2	.01



Latent classes are **structurally equivalent** in East and West, but class sizes are **different** across groups



Structure of Latent Classes

- Class 1: **Low Family VOC**

Categories		Family	Old-Age Security	Emotional	Social-Economic
Not important	1	.44	.43	.02	1.00
	2	.52	.39	.25	.00
Important	3	.00	.18	.39	.00
	4	.03	.00	.34	.00

Category-specific response probabilities



Structure of Latent Classes

■ Class 2: Medium Family VOC

Categories		Family	Old-Age Security	Emotional	Social-Economic
Not important	1	.10	.01	.00	.83
	2	.30	.42	.03	.17
Important	3	.56	.44	.30	.00
	4	.14	.13	.67	.00

Category-specific response probabilities



Structure of Latent Classes

- Class 3: High Family VOC

Categories		Family	Old-Age Security	Emotional	Social-Economic
Not important	1	.03	.00	.00	.45
	2	.00	.00	.00	.39
Important	3	.21	.43	.00	.13
	4	.76	.57	1.00	.03

Category-specific response probabilities

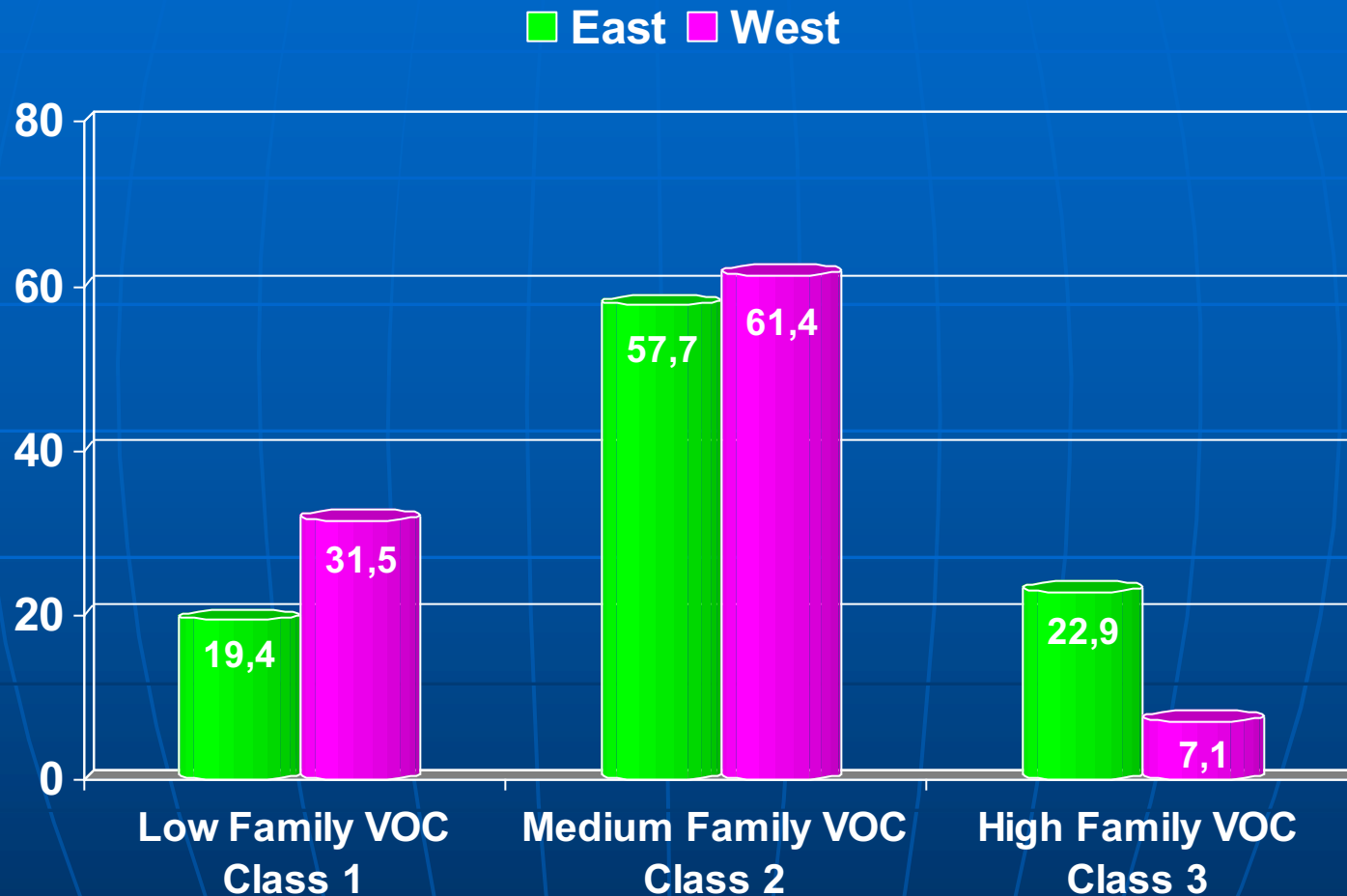


Structure of Latent Classes

	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Family	Low	Medium	High
Old-Age Security	Low	Medium	High
Emotional	Medium	High	High
Social- Economic	Low	Low	Low



Class Sizes in East and West



Summary of the Results

1. How many latent classes?

→ 3-class solution selected from single group analyses

2. Latent classes same or different across groups?

→ Same latent classes exist in East and West

→ Structural equivalence – same measurement model

3. Class sizes same or different in East and West Germany?

→ Class sizes different – East as compared to West:

→ More mothers in the **High Family VOC**-class

→ Less mothers in the **Low Family VOC**-class



Conclusions

- More collectivistic and family-oriented society of the former GDR still has an impact on child-related value structures of East-German mothers 12 years after the reunification
- Beside significant differences in value orientations, most mothers in **both parts of Germany** endorsed **emotional values** of children and at the same time attached medium importance to **family-related values** (Class 2)
- **Social-economic values** of children were **not important** for any of the identified groups



Conclusions

- Questions for future research
 - Do East-West differences regarding child-related value structures also occur for other generations (Grandmothers, Younger Mothers, Adolescents)?
 - How are child-related value structures transmitted from one generation to the next in East and West Germany?

References

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